

#### BEHEMOTH

- Amazon, Brazil: In Fortean Times 97, p. 34-37, Jeremy Wade discusses sightings of giant snakes in South America. Some resemble dinosaurs, others appear as UFO or USO. This is typical shape-changing behavior of some of the more mythical water monsters.
- Bibliography: \* horned snake sightings - surviving dinosaurs? asks Loren Coleman in Fortean Times 97, p. 45 \* Award of one million Pound for the proof that Nessie exists, by PolyGram (Sonntag Aktuell, 26 January 97) \* A theory that the Lake Pend Oreille monster, Oregon, was a navy cover-up of secret submarine testing (Fortean Times 98, p. 18)
- Loch Ness: \* Summer 1996, Craigdarroch House Hotel, Foyers: According to the Hotel's proprietor, David Munro, 16 guest saw a unexplained v-wake on the loch. (Inverness Courier, 18 February 1997) \* September 1996, Two Southborne, Bornemouth, brothers, Joseph (19) and Alistair (14) MacLean, spotted Nessie last summer. They were fishing on the shore when they heard a "whosshing" sound. Looking up, they saw a "large black mass about 20 ft in length and at one point a flipper came out of the water", according to the Bournemouth Advertiser (19 September 1996). Their father, William, said: "We definitely saw something out there. There were no humps or head, it just looked like a gigantic black snake moving through the water." \* 16 February 1997, 3 pm, from Craigdarroch House Hotel, Foyers: An English family, the Shields from Chesshire, observed an object move quickly through the water. It looked like a jet-ski with a white bow wave and disappeared after two minutes. (Inverness Courier, 18 February 1997) \* Dates uncertain: Several sightings have been claimed by Rita Goold, including a headneck. She admits she was fooled 3 years ago when she saw a typical v-wake. "The BBC took their film away to have it analysed and back came the word that they had a picture of a boat with a man at the helm." (Inverness Courier January 28, 1997; all information via Andreas Trottmann, private communication and Loch Ness Newsclipping Service, vol. 3, no. 1)

#### LEVIATHAN

- Sea monsters in the Talmud: The Talmud tract Baba Batra 73b-74a lists tall tales, the first three about sea monsters. Rabba bar bar Chana reports that on a ship journey, he saw a gigantic fish with a parasite in its nose. The dead fish was washed ashore and destroyed 60 cities, it fed 60 cities and the remains of the fish were salted by 60 cities. Its eyes produced 300 barrels of oil. When he returned after 12 months, the Rabbi saw that people sawed its bones into logs and reerected the 60 destroyed cities! Rabba bar bar Chana further reported that on another journey, he saw a fish which had sand on its back and grass growing on it. The crew thought it was an island and lighted a fire on its back to cook. When the back got too hot, the fish turned over. Had not the ship anchored nearby, the crew would have drowned. Rabba bar bar Chana is also the source for the next story: "Once we were travelling by ship. And the ship sailed from one fin of a fish to the other for three days and three nights, although it swam in one direction and we in the other. If you think we had a slow ship: When one fired an arrow, the ship was quicker than the arrow. And Rab Aschi commented: It was a small marine fish, it had only two fins." (Günter Stemberger: Der Talmud. Munich: C. H. Beck 1982, p. 193-194)
- Japanese movie producer Tomoyuki Tanaka, the creator of Godzilla, the dinosaur/sea monster starring in 22 Japanese films, died on April 2, 1997. The first Godzilla movie was released in 1954, the last one in 1995. The fire spouting Godzillachanged from a disastrous enemy of mankind to a friend of the Japanese in the last of the movies. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 April 1997, p. 10)

According to reports in the German media, "Independence day"-director Roland Emmerich is planning a remake of the first Godzilla movie.

- Alaska, USA: A biologist photographed a young right whale in Bristol Bay, Alaska, according to the "Anchorage Daily News". Right whales were supposedly extinct for 150 years, and the total number in all seas is calculated at several hundreds. They are protected by law since 1935. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 13 February 1997, p. 12)

- Megamouth shark: A new megamouth shark, only 6ft 9in length, was caught on May 4, 1995, off Senegal. It is the first specimen from the Atlantic, although there are reports that one has been caught off Brazil, writes Dr Karl Shuker in FÜRTERAN Times 98, p. 17.

- Bibliography: \* Fortean Times 97, p. 51 has more news on the Mont St Michel dragon. \* San Diego, California: A 23ft sea serpent, actually an oarfish, was washed up at Coronado Beach in November 1997. Fortean Times 97, p.16-17.

#### MARINE LIFE

- Whales: \* A Dutch warship was damaged in the Gulf of Biscay when a whale attacked it and tore a 2m hole into its hull. (Rheinpfalz, 17 Dec 96) \* 5 sperm whales stranded at Puponga, Golden Bay, New Zealand, on February 24, 1997. "The stranding is the ninth in the bay in the past decade, but most of them have been pilot whales". (The Nelson Mail, 25 February 97, p. 1 & 10; credit: Regina Magin)

- \* A 10m porpoise stranded at Big Pine Keys/Florida after having been shot at 5 times. (Bild, 14 March 97, p. 6) \* 78-year-old Norwegian fisherman Sverre Flem told NRK radio station that a 15m whale rammed his boat in a courtship ritual. Flem at first thought the "attacking" thing was a submarine. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4. April 97, p. 10)

- Sharks: \* A 7m (basking?) shark stranded near Cancale, Brittany, during low tide. Fireme kept the gentle creature wet until it swam back to sea at high tide. (Bild, 11 March 97; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 11 March 1997, p. 12) \* Hardy Krüger Jr. son of the German film star, was attacked by a white shark at Dangerous Point, South Africa, while shooting a film scene for German TV. Sounds more like promotion than like a real event. (Bild, 13 March 97)

#### CRYPTOZOLOGY

- Thylacine: According to a report in Bild (26 March 97, p. 5), the German tabloid, villagers have discovered a living thylacine in the Indonesia-occupied part of New Guinea. Zoologist are on their way to confirm the discovery, as "it is thought to have been extinct for 50 years". Well, actually, it was thought to be a native of Tasmania! If this story turns out to be true, we should seriously consider the many thylacine sightings from the Australian mainland.

#### LETTER

In Bilk 74, I referred to the theory that a "crocodile man" of Lake Tanganika is a giant otter. I made fun of it. I received a letter by its originator, Carlos Bonet Betoret, who rightly pointed out one should never ridicule any idea: "I explained my theory about the strange animal from the River Lukuga, which is called 'mamba-mutu'. My friend Jodisi Kirunga of Burundi gave me some information about this animal before his death in November 1994, diving in the Lake Tanganika where he researched crustaceans. Naturally we need more information, and then I have written to the National Geographic to organize an expedition to the River Lukuga, perhaps in the year 2000. Meanwhile, I think that it is my right, if I want to defend the idea that the 'mamba-mutu' is an unknown species of giant otter, and of course this theory must be the objective of a serious scientific criticism. But you are mocking my article and naturally, you are mocking my friend Jodisi Kirunga. ... I beg you to publish this letter in Bilk and also I must ask you to finish with this mockery." I do apologise. Perhaps I tend to be over-the-top sometime.